

**Subject:** Consultation Process for Non-Metropolitan Local Officials

**From:** "M. Anne Brooks" <annebrooks@ak.net>

**Date:** Thu, 05 Feb 2004 12:15:03 -0900

**To:** stip@dot.state.ak.us

First of all, thanks for sending me a copy of the draft "official consultation process" for consultation with officials in non-metropolitan areas.

I am a public involvement professional who has worked on numerous process throughout the state and I offer the following comments based on my experience.

1. The responsibilities of the general purpose local government in non-metropolitan areas is blurred and often includes the Tribal Council AND city government. I believe that when both exist, both should be informed in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

2. Consultation need additional definition--if I were to implement the policy as it stands -- does inform mean that I send them a letter, sit down and discuss the proposal with the entity, or just send them a project newsletter. Or does it mean the "community contact person" places a call? What level constitutes a "consultation"? If the "consultation" is provided and no one shows up, does it still constitute a "consultation?"

3. Is it possible to spell out the period of time for a community to provide comment prior to approval or acceptance of plan changes? Communities and their elected/appointed local officials are often reluctant to provide comment until they have aired the issues at a local meeting. Will the process provide enough time for the local official to do that.

We've spelled out the period of time to review and comment on the effectiveness of the consultation process, but not on the consultation itself. I think it is only fair to develop a timeline for informing communities of plan changes that will directly impact them.

In practice, will the "community contact person" inform the community leader of a change to the STP or STIP and let them know that they have 45 days to comment on the change?

The federal regulation requires that the state have a "documented process" for consulting...should this process also spell out how the process is documented by those who implement the process.

Finally, it would be an important part of the implementation to prepare a process brochure to send to community leaders, or have available to the "community contact person" so they can use it to inform the communities of the state's consultation process. There is constant turnover in some communities that will affect the effectiveness of the consultation if education isn't part of the process.

Thanks for providing an opportunity to comment. If you have any questions about any of these thoughts/ideas, please contact me.

--

Anne Brooks, P.E.  
Brooks & Associates  
1704 Bannister Road  
Anchorage, AK 99508-4021  
Tel: 907-272-1877  
Fax: 907-272-7194

This electronic communication is intended only for the named addressee (s) and may contain confidential information. If you are not the named addressee (s), any use, dissemination, distribution or copying of this

communication is prohibited. If you have received this electronic communication in error, please notify the sender by return e-mail and delete the original communication from your system. Thank you.